



Against the Odds

Jane Bond

I should never have become a lawyer. The odds against it were too great. In 1973, I was living in Akron as a young, single mother with two little girls. I had a Journalism degree from Ohio University but could not get a job in my chosen field because women were suitable only for the society pages and as the exceptional "tough dame" reporter. Law was becoming a hot area as the Nixon presidency began to crumble. Feminism was slowly rolling through society, and increasingly, women were looking at law schools as a real possibility for the first time. I was part of that wave and applied as a night student at The University of Akron School

of Law. Only ten women were admitted in the fall of '73. The Dean of Admissions was skeptical that I could do even part time.

I started that fall, working part-time during the day and using one critical lifeline, the University Childcare Program on campus. Having nearby childcare for my girls during the day in a high-quality program while I studied and worked downtown was essential. During my evening classes, I had a babysitter in my home. At the end of the first quarter, as I began studying for exams, I was exhausted. Maybe the skeptics were right. Either I had to quit school, quit my job, or give away my children. So, I quit my job. Money had been tight before, but now I was taking a vow of poverty.

I went to the Dean's office and said I wanted to enroll in the full-time day program. After some difficulties, it was finally decided that I would remain a night student and add day classes. I wanted to graduate in three years with the day students, but I had "lost" a quarter. I had to work hard to keep up and catch up. The next years passed in a fog. I knew I had to do exceptionally well to get a job after graduation and overcome my double bind of being a woman and a mother. I submitted a case note for the law review which was accepted for publication. My years at The University of Akron were difficult, but, at key points, people stepped up and gave me the help I needed. I graduated in three years and went on to a career in Law and the judiciary. My daughters are also University of Akron grads—one in Education and the other in

Law. Our lives, like thousands of others, have been shaped by
the University.